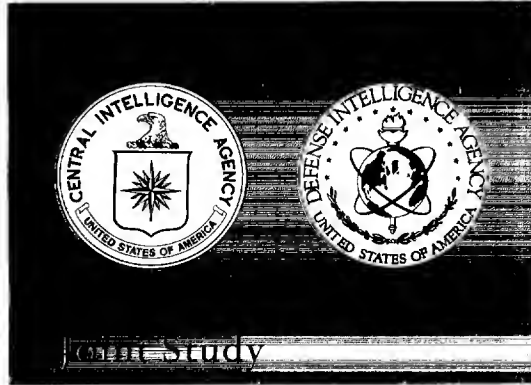


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Weekly Survey of Communist Military Developments in Indochina

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13 March 1974

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13 March 1974

Fifty-Fourth Report**WEEKLY SURVEY
OF COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS
IN INDOCHINA***

(This report covers the period
from 6 through 12 March 1974)

The Key Points

- Troop infiltration increased during the past week as an average of more than one new group per day started the trip south. Of the eight groups detected (totaling more than 3,500 troops), five are destined for COSVN, two for VC MR 5, and one for the B-3 Front.
- Three North Vietnamese antiaircraft artillery regiments have withdrawn from Quang Tri Province to North Vietnam.
- North Vietnamese logistic activity was heavy in southern North Vietnam and Laos during the week.
- Recent aerial photography shows that the new Communist infiltration-supply system along South Vietnam's western border is motorable for almost its entire 500-mile length and that improvements now under way along the central section should permit sustained usage by early summer.
- The Khmer Communists continue to receive materiel and vehicles from the North Vietnamese, possibly over and above the 900 tons promised earlier.

* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

Preface

This report is the fifty-fourth in a series summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military supplies toward and into South Vietnam, (II) significant Communist combat activity, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

DETAILS

I. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese
Personnel and Military Supplies*Personnel Infiltration*

1. Hanoi increased the rate of troop infiltration during the past week, as eight new regular groups with a total strength of more than 3,500 personnel were detected at Binh Tram 8 near Vinh, North Vietnam. Five of the groups are en route to the COSVN area, two are destined for VC MR 5, and the eighth group is moving toward the B-3 Front. In addition, eight special-purpose groups were observed last week. Seven of the groups, which have an aggregate strength of about 180 persons, are destined for South Vietnam, while the other group with an estimated strength of 20 specialists is en route to southern Laos.

2. So far during the 1973/74 infiltration cycle, some 60,000 troops have been sent to the southern war zones, about 30% fewer than during the comparable period a year ago (see table). Moreover, the 38,000 troops specifically destined for various areas of South Vietnam this season are about half the number that departed from North Vietnam for those areas during the same period in 1972/73. Although the number of infiltrators going to all regions of the country is lower, the greatest drop has occurred in MR Tri Thien, where no new groups have been detected being sent since September 1973. In contrast, this season's infiltration starts to the COSVN area are almost the same as that for the comparable 1972/73 period.

Comparative Starts of Troops
from North Vietnam, by Destination
1 September - 12 March

	1972-73	1973-74
Total	85,000	60,500
MR Tri-Thien	26,000	2,000
MR 5	9,000	5,000
B-3 Front	14,000	7,000
COSVN	25,000	24,000
Southern Laos/MR 559	11,000	22,500

3. In South Vietnam, the NVA 541st Engineer Regiment in Quang Tri Province ordered one of its subordinate battalions on 2 March to make 86 trucks available to transport people from a communications-liaison station near Khe Sanh to an unlocated area along the southern MR 1 border. Although the transients were not identified, they may belong to several regular infiltration groups which left North Vietnam during February for VC MR 5. If true, these personnel apparently will travel to their destination via Communist Route 14.

Redeployments

4. Analysis of COMINT indicates that Hanoi has withdrawn three of its antiaircraft artillery (AAA) regiments -- the 230th, 241st, and 280th -- from Quang Tri Province to Ninh Binh Province in North Vietnam since December 1973. The withdrawal of some 3,000 men in these units reduces the North Vietnamese air defense threat in South Vietnam to 23 regiments (22 AAA and one SAM) and 22,000 men. There are now 18 regiments in MR 1, at least three in western MR 2, and two in northern MR 3 (see the map on Communist and South Vietnamese combat forces).

5. The move of the three AAA regiments to Ninh Binh Province, coupled with the presence of two SAM regiments there, has created an unusually large assemblage of forces in Ninh Binh and Thanh Hoa Provinces. The new North Vietnamese tactical authority with three strategic reserve divisions, plus armor and artillery units, currently is located in Thanh Hoa. North Vietnam has undertaken comprehensive training programs in the north since the cease-fire to correct such shortcomings as the lack of coordination among its forces, and this concentration of units may presage training exercises to integrate more effectively the operation of infantry forces with armor, artillery, and air defense troops.

Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies

North Vietnam

6. Following the pattern of the past few weeks, Communist logistic units in southern North Vietnam continued to receive and dispatch several hundred tons of ordnance daily. On 6 March, for example, a storage area north of Vinh received 120 tons of ammunition and shipped out 70 tons. Also, nearly 700 tons of ordnance reportedly was awaiting shipment at the storage area, including 330 tons of 130-mm ammunition and 275 tons of 140-mm rockets. The following day, logistic units near Vinh reported receiving another 200 tons of ordnance and dispatching about 110 tons. A similar level of activity was noted in this area during the rest of the week, as heavy supply shipments continued unabated.

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

		MR 1	
VC/NVA ¹	RVNAF ²	VC/NVA	RVNAF
184,000	372,000	84,000	103,000
		325th	VNMC
		324B	Airborne
		304th	1st
		711th	2nd
		2nd ³	3rd
		673rd AAA	Regional Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.

3. Only one infantry regiment subordinate to the division.

MR 3

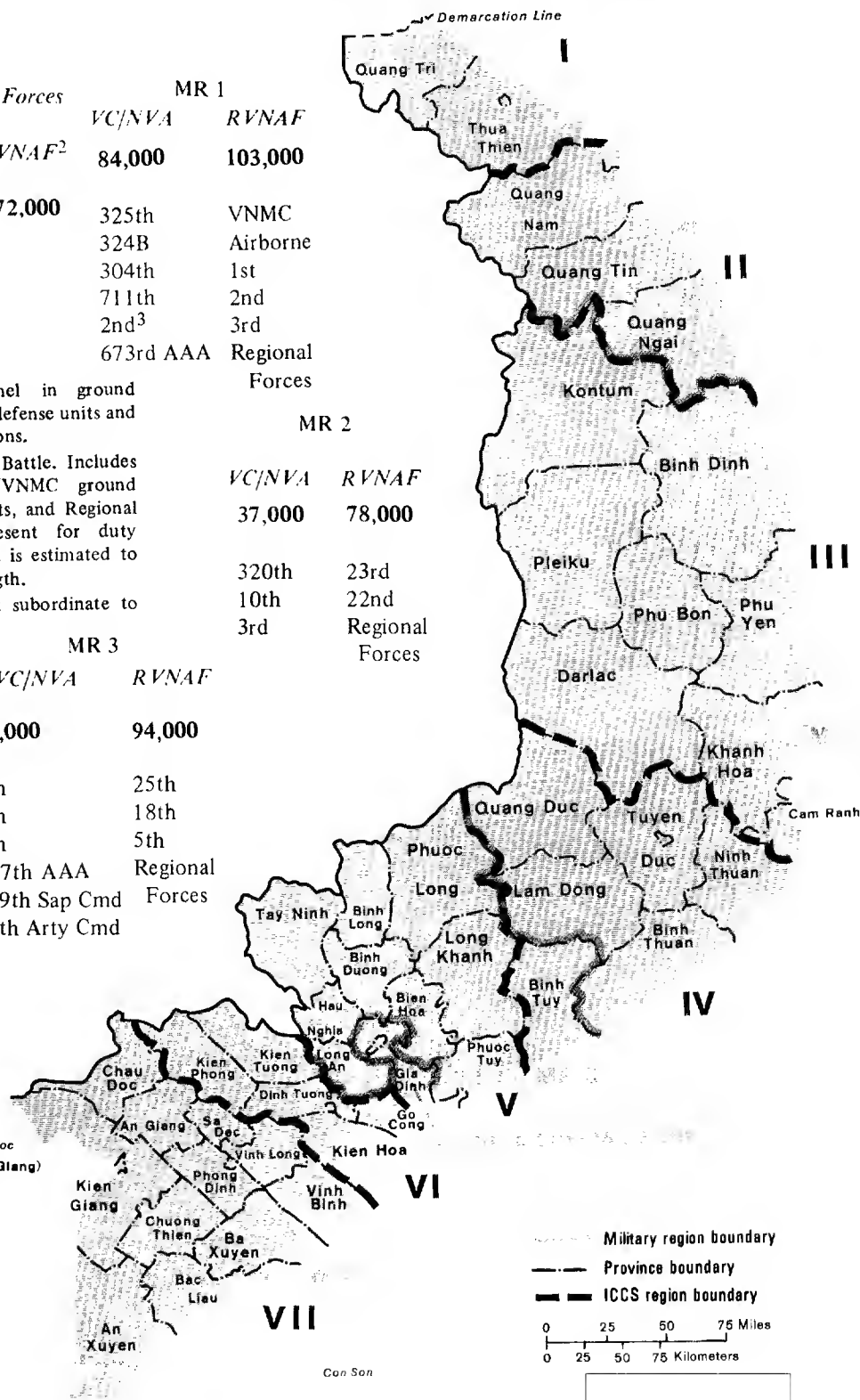
VC/NVA	RVNAF
39,000	94,000
9th	25th
7th	18th
5th	5th
377th AAA	Regional Forces
429th Sap Cmd	
69th Arty Cmd	

MR 4

VC/NVA	RVNAF
24,000	97,000
1st ³	21st
	9th
	7th
	Regional Forces

MR 2

VC/NVA	RVNAF
37,000	78,000
320th	23rd
10th	22nd
3rd	Regional Forces



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7. Since late February, Communist logistic units near Vinh have handled sizable quantities of 130-mm ammunition. During this period, at least 300 tons of 130-mm ammunition (about 3,200 rounds) have been sent south and, as indicated above, at least another 330 tons are awaiting shipment. This 630 tons is greater than the total amount of 130-mm ammunition detected moving south since the beginning of the dry season. Because North Vietnamese artillery units in South Vietnam have used the 130-mm field gun infrequently since the cease-fire, these shipments will increase considerably their stock of 130-mm ammunition.

8. In other activity, recently available information indicates that at least 1,400 tons of cargo were shipped by North Vietnamese logistic units on motorized launches along inland waterways in southern North Vietnam during the period 11 February-2 March. About 75% of the cargo was ammunition, including some 500 tons of 100-mm tank ammunition. Most of the ammunition reportedly was destined for a storage area near Vinh, where it probably was transloaded onto trucks for shipment farther south.

Laos

9. In Laos, the level of logistic activity also was high, as the main supply corridor continued to receive heavy use during the week. On most days, aerial photography showed large truck convoys along the length of the corridor from Tchepone to the tri-border area, including a daily high of about 150 trucks moving south on 10 March. COMINT provided no specific breakdown on the type of cargo moving, although all types of supplies probably are being shipped.

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10. In other activity, [] photography showed 175 trucks on Route 9 in Laos east of Tchepone. This activity supports earlier judgments that the majority of supplies entering Laos this dry season move west from South Vietnam over Route 9 (or other roads in the western DMZ leading into Route 9), and that the Ban Karai Pass is playing a secondary role.

Cambodia

11. The Khmer Communists (KC) are still receiving materiel and vehicles from the North Vietnamese. An intercepted KC message of 1 March indicated that they had begun receiving a "second shipment" of 400 tons of materiel and 200 vehicles from the North Vietnamese. Although the new 400 tons of aid could be part of the original 900-ton package, the reference to a "second shipment" suggests that it may be an additional increment.

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[redacted]

12. An initial 110 of the 400 tons was received by the KC on 25 February. A substantial part of this shipment consisted of heavy weapons, including nearly 600 107-mm rockets and seven 120-mm mortars with about 1,200 rounds. This is the first known instance of the North Vietnamese providing 120-mm mortars to the KC. A 9 March message indicates that the KC already are preparing to move some of these heavy weapons and other ordnance into the Siem Reap-Kompong Thom area, where aggressive FANK operations have penetrated KC areas during the past month.

South Vietnam

13. No significant Communist logistic activity was detected in South Vietnam during the past week.

II. Significant Communist Combat Activity

14. Communist cease-fire violations during the last week in South Vietnam remained at approximately 80 per day, well below the 1973 daily average of 100. Most incidents continue to consist of minor harassing actions, attacks-by-fire, and ground probes, although two major terrorist attacks in MR 4 caused the death of at least 34 civilians.

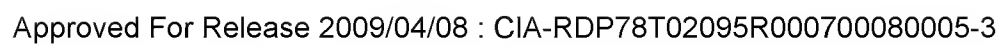
III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

15. [redacted] photography shows that the new Communist infiltration-supply system along South Vietnam's western border is motorable for almost its entire 500-mile length. The system extends as far south as the major Communist headquarters at Loc Ninh, in Binh Long Province.

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16. The last remaining gap, part of a bypass around government-held Dak Pck, had been narrowed to a mere 150 feet [redacted]. Although motorable, the central portion of the new system still needs substantial improvement before it matches the dual-lane, well-drained sections farther north and south. Improvements under way in the central section will probably enable sustained usage by early summer (see the transportation map).

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